

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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To

The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States/UTs.

Sub.- Additional guidelines on management of Postal Ballot Papers and the use of Election Duty Certificate.

Sir/Madam,

The Election Commission of India issued detailed guideline on smooth management of postal ballot papers vide its letter no. 52/2008/J.S. II dated 21st October, 2008. While reiterating that those guidelines with regard to management of postal ballot papers shall be implemented properly by all the CEOs/DEOs and ROs, in the specific context of ensuring Lok Sabha election 2009, the following additional instructions are issued by the Commission which need to be read in the overall context of the elaborate instruction issued earlier.

1. During the ensuing parliamentary election, polling staff would be primarily drawn from within the district and deployed in various assembly segments coming under specific parliamentary constituency. While deploying, care shall be taken to ensure that no polling staff is deployed in election duty in any of the assembly segments where he is a voter or working or in the constituency of his native place. Subject to these conditions, polling staff can be posted within the district. In this process, there is a fairly good chance of the majority of polling staff being deployed within the **PC** in which they are registered as electors.

2. (a) If an official deputed for polling duty in a polling station is an elector of the PC in which he is deployed on election duty, he should be given **Election Duty Certificate(EDC)** so that he can exercise his franchise on the basis of the EDC at the polling station in person where he is deployed on poll duty.
b) Similarly, when an official is deployed on election duty in the capacity of zonal Magistrate or sector official in a parliamentary constituency where he is a voter, he should also be given EDC so that he can exercise his franchise in any one of the polling stations that comes under the zone/sector allotted to him. For this purpose, the RO of the constituency will decide about the polling station in which the particular sector officer/zonal officer will exercise his franchise and will issue the EDC accordingly.
3. The question whether a particular polling personnel deployed on election duty or in reserve will use EDC facility or postal ballot facility, can be decided immediately after first randomization. At that stage, the number of staff going to be deployed outside the PC will be known. However, the group formation and the details of the polling station at which the individual polling staff is going to be deployed shall not be decided at that stage.
4. In the case of the officials referred to in para 2 above, who would be eligible for EDC, they should be briefed about the EDC facilities at the first training. The distribution of Form 12 A (application for EDC) in their case, shall be done at the second training session which should be held after the second stage randomization in which the formation of polling parties will be done. The officials should be instructed to fill in the relevant particulars in the Form and submit the same duly signed, then and there (at the second training). The existing instructions for keeping the electoral rolls of the constituencies at the venue of the training classes will be applicable in this case also to enable the polling personnel to mention in Form-12A the particulars

relating to their electoral roll entries (Sl No., Part No. of entries in the electoral roll). The copies of the electoral rolls will be kept in separate counters, assembly segment wise with sufficient number of staff to assist the election duty officials to locate their name in the roll. One of the particulars to be entered in Form-12A is the number and name of the polling station in which the polling personnel would be on duty. However, in the present system of allotment of polling stations, the details relating to the polling stations in which the polling personnel would be deployed on duty would be known only at the stage of the third randomization which is done just prior to the dispatch of polling parties to the polling stations. Therefore, the column relating to details of duty polling stations need not be filled in by the polling personnel when they submit the application. Applications in Form-12A, completed in other respects and duly signed by the polling personnel, would be collected at the second training class itself. These, again, should be collected assembly segment wise and the applications from the members of a polling party should be tagged together for convenience at the time of issue of EDC later. A register of names of polling personnel who have submitted these applications should be prepared and maintained assembly segment wise and polling station-wise within the Assembly segments.

5. In the case of officials appointed as micro observers also, the same facility of EDC will be provided in all cases where they are voters in the same P.C. Issue of EDC in their case will be done as soon as the polling stations are assigned to them.
6. In the scheme for receiving of applications in Form-12A and the issue of EDC, as explained above, it would be seen that all polling officials will need to be present for the second training and at the time of dispatch of parties/materials.
7. In view of the EDC system to be adopted, Form-12, which is the application format for postal ballot, should not be sent to the polling

personnel at the stage of requisitioning of staff or while calling them for training. In the case of all such polling personnel eligible for EDC, only Form-12A should be supplied.

8. The polling staff and persons on election duty to be deployed outside the PC, shall be given postal ballot facility and their voting by postal ballot at the postal ballot facilitation center shall be coordinated by the DEO of the district in which the official is registered as elector, as the initial training classes will be organized at their level.
9. The polling stations assigned to the polling parties would be known after the third randomization done just prior to the dispatch of polling personnel, and, therefore, EDC can be issued only at this stage. Immediately after the third randomization, EDCs shall be prepared for distribution to the polling personnel. There should be adequate arrangement with sufficient manpower to issue EDC to the polling personnel. This should also be done assembly segment wise with adequate number of separate counters for each assembly segment to avoid crowding and confusion. The name of the assembly segment and the polling station numbers handled by each counter should be prominently written and displayed on each counter. At this stage also, the record of issue of EDC should be maintained in a register. The names of the polling personnel issued with EDC should be entered in the register and the signature of the polling personnel obtained against their names as and when EDC is issued to them. The register should show the serial number of all polling stations, the names of polling personnel allotted to the polling stations and their signatures after obtaining the EDC. A format for maintaining the register is **annexed** to this letter.
10. Although the EDC is issued only at the time of dispatch of parties, marking of 'EDC' in the marked copies of electoral roll should be done as early as possible after the second training at which the officials would have submitted applications for EDC in Form 12A. 'EDC' shall

- be marked in the marked copies of electoral roll against the names of all officials who have submitted applications in Form 12A and are eligible for issue of EDCs. Preparation of marked copy of electoral roll should not be delayed till the stage of issue of EDC. Once Form 12A application is submitted, the officials concerned can only vote using the EDC at the polling station mentioned therein, irrespective of whether they are on active duty or kept as reserves.
11. If an official is deployed on election duty at the polling station or in the polling area outside the PC in which he is a voter, he/she shall be given postal ballot facility. The responsibility for issuing Form-12 and organizing facilitation center for exercising franchise by such voters shall be that of the RO of the constituency in which the official concerned is enrolled as a voter. This facilitation shall be done well in advance before the official concerned is deputed on election duty outside the PC area. In this case also, proper record of all postal ballot paper issued to the polling personnel should be maintained as per the existing instructions.
 12. In case of last moment dispatch of a polling staff due to any contingency from one PC area to another PC area within the district or from outside the district and in case sufficient time is not available for extending facilitation center based postal ballot opportunity for him, then due care shall be taken to provide postal ballot facility separately to the official to enable him to exercise his franchise. In such cases, the officials concerned should be advised to return the postal ballot by post. In this case also, the responsibility shall lie with the RO of the constituency where the official is enrolled as a voter.
 13. For the polling personnel kept as reserves, the RO shall decide the polling stations in which they are to cast vote using EDC since they are not assigned to any particular polling station in advance. The polling stations for casting of vote by such personnel should be the one located near the place where the reserve personnel are to

assemble and remain before they are moved to any polling station, as and when required. If the number of reserve polling personnel in a location is large, different polling stations near the location should be allotted for them to cast vote using the EDC so that one polling station is not clogged due to very large number of EDC voters. Invariably in all cases, the polling station in which they are to vote should be mentioned while issuing EDCs. Hence, it is necessary to identify the polling stations in advance, taking into account the location of the reserve polling personnel's assembling place. Adequate transport facility as may be required should be provided at the locations.

14. At the polling stations, the Presiding Officers should brief the polling agents about the facility provided to the polling personnel to vote in that polling station using EDC, and the number of polling personnel issued with the EDC to vote in that polling station should be informed to them. The exercise of franchise using EDC by the polling staff shall take place only after briefing the polling agents and the P.O in their diary and in the relevant column of Form 17C shall mention about the number of votes polled by the polling staff using EDC. In the Form 17A (register of voters), in the column meant for serial number of elector in the electoral roll, the serial number, part number and the names of Assembly Segment shall be mentioned. For example, if the EDC holder is enrolled at Sl. No. 415 in part No. 25 of Assembly Segment 'XYZ', the entries in column 2 of Form 17A in that case would be '415/25/XYZ'. In the remarks column of Form 17A, "EDC voter" shall be written. The polling personnel using EDC facility should cast vote only when the polling agents are present. If in any polling station, no polling agent turns up, the polling personnel will vote when the Observer visits the polling station. In the case of the reserve polling personnel, they should be advised to vote as soon as

possible in the beginning itself, as they may be required later or to be shifted to different polling stations to meet emergent situations.

15. In Form 17C, the Presiding officers are required to mention the number of votes cast in the EVM on the basis of EDC. They should be specifically briefed to fill up this column and also to note down the number of EDC votes on a separate sheet of paper and to hand it over at the reception centre in a separate counter set up only for receiving this sheet. The sheet should indicate the name of the assembly segment and the polling station number also. The ROs should later find out the total number of votes cast on EDC and see whether the number tallies with the number of EDCs issued. If there is any discrepancy, the position should be cross-checked with the Presiding Officer of the polling station in which discrepancy has occurred.
16. Only a perfect coordination between the sponsoring authority who sponsors the names of the officials for election duty and the RO of the constituency where the officials is a voter can ensure a proper functioning of the above system. The DEO shall monitor the progress very closely.
17. In the above process in the management of postal ballot system and EDC, voting by officials on election duty will, operate in three methods i.e (I). Election Duty Certificate (II) Postal Ballot given to the polling staff and receipt of ballot papers after marking the vote received from them at **postal ballot facilitation** center (III). Postal Ballots given to persons on election duty and received back by post or through drop-box kept in the RO's office.
18. In order to ensure that there is no confusion in any of the above three methods, the DEO will play a crucial role. Even before the database of the persons to be deployed on election duty is made ready for randomization, a proper verification shall be done to ensure the electoral details of each and every individual polling staff indicating the AC number, Part number and Sl. number of that polling staff in

the electoral roll, is properly filled in. The sponsoring authority shall be asked to fill in the details. In case such details are not available, efforts shall be made to trace the details and incorporate those details in the database. The DEOs should also take pro-active initiative to ensure that if any polling personnel is not enrolled as elector, he/she is given Form-6 so that they can apply for enrolment and become an elector under continuous updating before the last date for making nominations.

19. In case of last moment deployment of any staff on election duty outside the PC **on the basis of the appointment letter**, the RO/ARO of the assembly segment where such a staff is a voter, shall give the staff concerned the Form-12, and later the postal ballot alongwith Forms-13A, 13B, 13C and 13D.

20. The above instruction may be brought to the notice of all concerned for implementation without any deviation.

Yours faithfully,

(K.F. Wilfred)

Annexure

Account of EDC issued

Name of PC

I Name of Assembly Segment

Sl. No. of polling station	Name of polling personnel	Signature
1.	1. 2. 3.	
2.	1. 2. 3.	
.....		
.....		

Total no. of polling personnel In the Assembly Segment _____
issued with EDC

II. Name of Assembly Segment

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.....
.....

Total no. of polling personnel In the Assembly Segment _____
issued with EDC

III.

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Grand total of polling personnel in the P.C. _____
issued with EDC